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Bandler, William

A statement issued by
Mr. William Bandler...

[New York]

[1920]

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Gift of the President

Box

308

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Box 136

A statement issued by
Mr. WILLIAM BANDLER
President of the Clothing Man-
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Y., Inc. setting forth the vital
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DECEMBER 1920

Imminent danger of collapse
to New York Clothing Market
through inability to compete
with other clothing centres.

The Union's refusal to recede
from inflated war wages.

Oct. 18, 1923 467

IN order to meet the public's demand for a reduction of clothing prices, and in order to save to New York City the clothing market, with its annual output of Two Hundred Million Dollars, and to furnish employment to about sixty thousand workers, it is imperative that there be a complete change in the fundamentals which control the local labor market, that the Industry be restored to a basis of business efficiency, and that there be eradicated the evil practices in which the industry is steeped and the perils which threaten it.

On August 26, 1920, the contract between the Clothing Manufacturers' Association and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America expired. Thereafter the manufacturers presented to the Union certain proposals for changes, which were regarded essential to prevent the complete collapse and ruin of the local market. Innumerable conferences were held which led to nothing. The proposals of the manufacturers were rejected. The Union took the position that irrespective of merit and of existing economic conditions, it would not recede one iota from what it had secured during war times, when there was a great shortage of merchandise and undersupply of labor, brought about by the drafts for the war industries. Finally the manufacturers proposed in writing that the conferences be continued only upon the condition that the Union agree that the workers shall be held individually responsible for a daily standard of production, to be agreed upon, and calculated upon a basis permissive of competition with other markets where the Amalgamated Union standards now prevail, and that the manufacturers be permitted to discharge incompetent and inefficient help. This proposal was unqualifiedly rejected. There remained no other course open to the manufacturers than to publicly announce the severance of relationship between the Association and the Union, and to proceed to put into effect a plan of work whereby each worker would be paid for what he produces, and on a basis which would permit the New York manufacturers to

secure business in competition with the other clothing markets where the wages are very substantially lower.

The refusal of the Union must not be considered as an isolated act. It but reflects the general attitude of this Union, in relationship to employers in the industry, and the fundamental object and purposes of its organization and activities.

Fundamental Principles

Many of the larger manufacturers, recognizing the absolute impossibility of continuing in the manufacture of clothing in this center under this Union's domination, have given up their businesses here and established themselves in other places where they hope to be permitted to manufacture under less burdensome restrictions. There is and can be no hope for the saving of the New York clothing market, unless,

Renunciation of Sovietism

FIRST: The relationship between the employers and workers, dealing together, either individually or through the Association of the former and the Union of the latter be reestablished upon a most complete renunciation by the workers of what is and has been the fundamental revolutionary doctrine and purpose of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union as stated in its Constitution, as follows:

"to put the organized working class in actual control of the system of production' to the end that they shall 'be ready to take possession of it'."

This doctrine, as editorially commented upon by the *New York Times* in its issue of December 10, 1920,

Quoting from

"is no vague threat or Utopian ideal, but a program the first part of which is already achieved and the second part an ever present purpose."

"The New Unionism in the Clothing Industry," J. M. Budish and George Soule write: 'Sooner or later the clothing workers are likely to demand that the control of the

employer and the primary interest of private capital be eliminated from their industry.' They add: 'There is no way out but for the Unions themselves to assume the productive control, to develop into a syndicate or guild.'"

The manufacturers in the clothing trade do not intend to lend themselves to the establishment of Sovietism in their industry.

Employment on Basis of Efficiency—Individual Responsibility for Standard of Production

SECOND: That due rewards be given to workers on the basis solely of service, efficiency and competency; that each worker be held responsible for a standard production and be paid on a basis which will permit the New York clothing manufacturers to successfully compete with other markets where the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union has established and permits different standards; that the present week work system, with its attendant evils, including the wilful curtailment and the natural limitation of output, which is an incident of that system, soldiering on the job and limitation of apprentices, be completely eradicated from the industry.

Repudiation of Union's Doctrine of Life Tenure of Employment of Workers Without Regard to Efficiency

THIRD: That there be renounced the present doctrine of life tenure of employment to workers, without regard to efficiency or competency, and that there be restored to employers the right to dispense with the services of unnecessary, incompetent and inefficient workers.

Restoration to Employers of Right to Select and Retain Independent Contractors

FOURTH: That there be restored to the manufacturer the right at all times to determine where he shall buy and where he shall cause to be manufactured his product; that the present rule prohibiting employers from dispensing with the services of an independent contractor, or to change from one contractor to another, be abrogated.

Scrapping Walking-Delegates

FIFTH: That the walking delegate, examples whose tyrannies and terrorism and other vicious practices, are daily brought to the public mind in the pending investigation in the Building Trades, be forever banished from the clothing market.

Approval of Arbitration and Rejection of Legislation and Receiverships for Industry

SIXTH: That the relationship between the workers and their employers, acting individually or collectively, be fixed by agreement of the parties themselves; that no outside agency be constituted, with legislative power, to determine the destinies, rights and obligations of the workers and employers in this industry.

The Association is not opposed to the arbitration of disputes under definitely written contracts made by the parties themselves, but is unalterably opposed to the creation in any individual of an Industrial Receivership, with power and authority to legislate for workers and employers as to the terms and conditions of labor.

Present economic conditions imperatively require that these emancipations come into the local market, and to them, the manufacturers, are unanimously and irrevocably committed.

False Pretense of "Look-Out and Sweat Shop" Exposed

The protestations of the Union that the manufacturers have inaugurated a "lockout" and propose to return to sweatshop conditions, are but humbug, sham and false pretense. This will be evidenced by the fact that the employers are about to put into operation a plan of work, whereby employment will be given to the thousands of workers who for a long time have been idle because of the inability of the manufacturers to compete and secure business, and the workers will be invited to work, but it is feared that they will be prevented from so doing by the Union's direction that they strike. Sweatshop conditions are to-day a matter of the remote past and are inconceivable and impossible, through the safeguards and protection afforded workers by our present Labor Laws.



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